Then, Sir, honourable Members were pleased to refer to the Board's entering the field for the purpose of purchase at a stage where practically it creates complications. A particular reference was made to the Tobacco Board's stepping in when the prices fall below the minimum support price. In fact, that is exactly when the prices fall below the minimum support price. The Tobacco Board had been entering the field and the Board had been not only helping the farmers but actually the auction procedure that has been started by the Tobacco Board has been yielding very good results. In fact, the growers had been getting very remunerative returns for their produce.

Sir, I would not like to go into further details of the observations that have been made by the honourable Members. I think I have taken quite a good time by now with these few words, Sir, I commend both the Bills to the House and request that they be passed.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): I shall now put the motion with regard to the first Bill to vote. The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for the constitution of a Board for the development of export of spices and for the control of cardamom industry including the control of cultivation of cardamom and matters connected therewith, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

*The motion was adopted.*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): We shall now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

*Clauses 2 to 42 and the Schedule were added to the Bill.*

*Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.*

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER: Sir, I move:

"That the Bill be passed."

*The question was put and the motion was adopted.*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): I shall now put the motion regarding the second Bill to vote. The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for imposition of cess on all spices which are exported for the purposes of carrying out measures for the development of export of spices, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

*The motion was adopted.*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): We shall now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

*Clauses 2 to 5 were added to the Bill.*

*Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.*

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER: Sir, I move:

"That the Bill be returned."

*The question was put and the motion was adopted.*

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## THE BUDGET (RAILWAYS), 1986-87—GENERAL DISCUSSION

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN (West Bengal): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, while discussing the railway budget for this year, it appears to me that the budget presented by the honourable Minister is a totally stale and colourless budget and it hardly promises any development of the railways although many tall claims have been made in the budget speech of the honourable Minister. I am afraid that if this be the type of budget that we are discussing today, then it will be very difficult for us even to fulfil the most inadequate Seventh Plan targets for the railways and people's sufferings will continue to increase as the years pass by. Not only this, this Budget further imposes burden on the travelling public, but it does not give any additional amenities to them. On the other side, the existing amenities are deteriorating, the condition of the railways, the services are worsening every passing day. So, I do not find any justification for the hike in the

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fares. I will take up the points one by one. While making these general observations, I would like to come to the point of the hike in the fares.

Sir, in the Budget, the hon. Minister claims that he has spared 90 per cent of the travelling public by not raising the fares of the suburban trains and the non-suburban ordinary trains and that the freight charges have not also been raised. This is the claim of the hon. Minister in his Budget speech. But, if we remember the last year's Budget, everybody of us has the experience that the last budget imposed a heavy burden on the back of the travelling public and also on the common people by raising the freight charges and the fare charges. That burden that was imposed last year is still crippling the people of our country. Now again another additional burden has been imposed on them, on the same crippling travelling public and general public. It has been claimed in the Budget speech that 90 per cent of the total number of passengers travelling on the Indian Railways have been spared from increase in the fares. It is a little bit confusing. It is not only confusing but it is a misstatement of facts. In fact, although it may be that of the total number of passengers only 10 to 15 per cent of the passengers travel in the express and mail trains, in terms of passenger kilometres it comes to about 50 per cent of the passenger kilometres in the Indian Railways. So, 50 per cent of the passenger kilometres are being charged higher by this Budget. If we look at the earlier year's performance, we find that the mail and express trains actually account for more than 50 per cent of the revenue from the passenger traffic. It is given in the Year Book of 1984-85 that for 1984-85 the mail and express trains accounted for 52.9 per cent of the total earnings. So, by raising the fair on the passengers of these trains, actually the Railway Ministry is imposing a very big burden on the railway travelling public. Not only that, but the additional yield that the Government is going to get is about Rs. 76 crores. But, in fact, what happened last year is that we find the difference between the actuals of 1984-85 and the revised estimate of 1985-86 of Rs. 257 crores. It means that when we come to the next budget when the revised estimates for 198687 will be placed, we will find that the actual difference would become more than Rs. 76 crores by actual calculation through out past experience. Actually, the Government is going to earn more money by imposing this fair hike on the travelling public. Not only that, I fail to understand the logic behind this fare hike, because the department has a surplus after an increased allocation to the Depreciation Fund and payments to the General Revenue.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that two weeks before the Railway Budget, the Government came down on the people by raising the administered price of petrol and diesel etc. I do not want to discuss all these things here, but that itself has imposed a back-breaking burden on the people of the country. The Railway Budget imposed another burden on the people. If you calculate all these things together, you will find that the Government is out to crush the oridnary and poorer sections of the people. They may say that charges for AC two-tier or First Class have also been raised, but most of the travelling people travel in the Second Class of the Mail and Express trains. Therefore, 80 to 85 per cent of the people or more than that have been adversely affected by this another hike in the fares. Therefore, I would request the Government that they should reconsider this. This raise in fares is unnecessary. They should withdraw this hike in fares.

Now, I would talk about the amenities given to the passengers before coming to the development programmes. We find many tall claims have been made in the Budget speech about the amenities that have been given to the travelling public. I do not know whether our Railway Minister has the experience of travelling by the railways, in ordinary second class or even in the ordinary first class or AC two-tire. Our experience is that amenities provided are deteriorating day-by-day. The conditions on the ordinary suburban trains are fast deteriorating. There is no space even to stand in the coaches. People just hang on to reach their destination risking their own life. In the long distance trains the

position is that they are overcrowded. Now-a-days, there is no justification for getting a reserved seat in three-tier compartment. So much people rush into these compartments, because they do not get space in other compartments. The result is that the people who have actually reserved a berth for sleeping, have to go sitting. Even in the ordinary first-class coaches the position is same. So many people will rush to the first-class coaches because there is no accommodation in other coaches. Not only that, coaches are stinking. Bathrooms and toilets stink because there is no water. There is no light. Cushions are all torn apart. There is no maintenance.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI (Maharashtra): I think the Hon. Member is talking about the conditions of the trains in West Bengal.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Perhaps you are living in a paradise. Anyway, I am talking of the Indian railways, not Bengal Railway. This is the position everywhere. I do not know whether our hon. Member has any experience of travelling by suburban trains in Bombay. Per haps he flies Even while living in the Bombay city, perhaps he uses helicopters. Anyway, my point is that ordinary facilities are not provided to the common travelling public.

In the Budget speech the Minister claimed that the meal packets are being served to passengers in hygienic conditions. In how many trains has this new system of food been introduced, I would like to ask? In very few trains it has been introduced. But there are number of grievances from the common people against the food served. I do not know whether the Honourable Minister is aware of it. In fact, the catering service is in a very bad shape. Uneatable things are being served to the common people for eating. I think that is the experience of common people. In two or three trains they might have introduced some new foodstuffs, but even these are also not working well. I am very much concerned about the common passengers.

Now, I would like to draw the attention of the Honourable Minister to two Rajdhani Express trains—the first one runs from Delhi to Calcutta and back and the second one runs from Delhi to Bombay and back. What is the condition in these trains? Even the bed rolls that are served in AC 2 tier are very dirty. They are not properly washed. Even the blankets are never washed. I feel the attitude of the Government is totally indifferent towards passenger amenities. They have no mind to give any amenities to the common people. The Government's only intention is to fleece them to raise fares every year and to extract money from them. I think this attitude of the Government and the Railways which is a public utility, is highly condemnable. They should look into the problem of fare hike and do some justice.

Now, Sir, I would like to come to the development of railways during the Seventh Five Year Plan. Now, if we look at the budget, we find that it does not envisage any development. The modest amount which has been allocated, I think, is very inadequate. With this type of budget how they are going to fulfil the targets in the Seventh Plan. I feel when this type of budget is repeated year after year, I do not know how they are going to fulfil the targets. I would just draw the attention of the Minister to one very important aspect. While raising the prices of petroleum, diesel and kerosene, the Government came out with an argument that the demand and consumption of these petroleum products has gone so high that they wanted to reduce the consumption by raising the prices. Now, what about the railways? They also use three types of fuel—(i) coal, (ii) diesel and (iii) electricity. I do no know how far they are using electricity. If they want to reduce the consumption of diesel by Railways then they should have gone in a big way for electrification of the railway tracks and production of more electric locomotives. But what is the position? The position is that the toal electrification programme in the Seventh Plan itself says that 3,400 KMs

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of tracks will be electrified. Now the target fixed for this year is only 730 Kms. I would like to draw the attention of the Honourable Minister somewhere in the budget, that is, the calculations which are made by makers of the budget itself, says that the cost of running of trains by electricity is cheaper than coal and diesel.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): Sir, I may inform the hon. Member that we in the Central Government are doing our best to keep the price as low as possible. And that is why we have not raised the fares or freight tariffs. I would request the hon. Member if he could try and influence the West Bengal Government to see that they do not charge us exorbitantly for electricity, because that affects our working in the Railways. As far as price rise in electricity is concerned, the West Bengal Government have raised the rates.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: I think, the Minister says the problem is only in West Bengal and nowhere else.

SHRI P. N. SUKUL (Uttar Pradesh): He is not speaking. He is referring to your State also.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: I am not speaking for West Bengal. I am a Communist. I am speaking for the entire India.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE (West Bengal): But the coal prices were not raised by West Bengal Government. It were raised by the Union Government. I think, the Railway Minister can enlighten us.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Anyway, my point is for electrification of the Railway, the Government should have taken this programme in a bigger way and they should not have been satisfied with a target of 713 kms for this year and electric locomotives, where the target is 17 electric locomotives for this year, I do not know, if this be the target by the Ministry for this year, how are they going to modernise the railways. We are already somewhere in the coal-age in the railways and diesel also will be not a befitting one for the railways if we want to maintain it efficiently. That is why, I would like to request the Hon'ble Minister, although he is blaming the West Bengal Government to consider this question again.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: I am not blaming anyone. I am seeking cooperation of the West Bengal Government through you.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Yes, I am ready to cooperate. Now, again your Budget is counter productive. Railway Reforms Committee said that 20,000 kms tracks are immediately to be replaced. You also agree to it and the Seventh Plan also say that 20,000 kms of track will have to be replaced. But your target is primary 2600 and secondary one 1200. Now with this meagre target, how are you going to replace 20,000 kms of the railway track which means one third of the total route kms of Indian Railways? You cannot do it. Now, what happens. Railway Minister must be knowing that because of this old track, over-aged track, you have reduced the speed of the trains. In all the modern countries of the world, whether you go to Japan or France or anywhere else, trains are speeded up. It is only in our country that trains are being slowed down. Three or four years back, all the mail trains were slowed down by at least two hours per journey. So, in our country it is being slowed down while in other countries, it is speeded up. This track renewal is a very important question in regard to modernisation and development of the railways. But you are not doing it properly. What happens? Accidents take place. While I come to the question of accidents, I will show all this. You have yourself admitted that because of equipment failure and over-aged tracks, these accidents are taking place. Now what happens? We are travelling from Delhi to Howrah, or Delhi to Bombay or Delhi to Madras. Somewhere, our train stops, in the middle, somewhere, some wagons have been derailed. Why wagons have been derailed? The reason is either the track is very old or the

wagon is overaged or some other equipment have failed. So, what happens? The entire train service becomes disrupted, paralysed causing sufferings to the travelling public and also causing loss to the Railways because so many people are not allowed to travel by trains and they have to opt for other modes of travelling. So, I would like the Railway Minister to reconsider all these proposals otherwise, the development of the Railways cannot take place only by raising the fares for the passengers. The development cannot take place at all. Now, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to another fact, i.e. wagons. 20,000 wagons for this year, this is the target. Last year, it was only 5,000. Then it was raised somewhere between 12369. That was their new target. Now, what is the implication of it? The implication is not only for the railways. Not only will the movement of goods suffer, but it will have other implications also. As regards the movement of goods, there is a report—I think the Minister will confirm it—that in 1984-85 as least four to five million tonnes of coal and fertiliser could not be moved because of shortage of wagons, and it resulted in a loss of revenue to the railways to the tune of Rs. 60 crores. If this is a fact, then the shortage of wagons is definitely counter-productive. There is a constant complaint from the coal authorities—Coal India is also a Central Government department—about shortage of wagons. The last Chairman regularly complained that at the pit-heads in all the collieries, coal was getting accumulated because there were no wagons for moving coal. That has been the complaint by Coal India for the last three years. It has been a constant complaint. And not only in regard to the movement of coal, but even in regard to the movement of food, fertiliser, iron and steel, there has been a shortage of wagons. The movement of these goods which are necessary for the development of the country, for the development of the economy, has been getting paralysed because of shortage of wagons. And whatever wagons are there are all overaged and should be treated as scrap. All these scraps are being used as wagons and that is why derailment is taking place on the Indian railways very frequently, disrupting the entire railway system, whether it is this railway or that railway, this zone or that zone So it is very essential that the Government must try to procure more wagons, not just 20,000 wagons. I think the Seventh Plan target is 90,000 wagons and that, too, is inadequate, according to the Railway Reforms Committee's recommendations. They have said that the Government should procure more wagons. But in the first year, they are procuring only 20,000 wagons. Now I come to its implication on the wagon industry. It has serious implications on the wagon industry of our country. We are frequently talking about the 21st century. We are frequently talking about industrial development. We are frequently talking about technology and all these things. Now what is the condition of the wagon industry because of the so-called development of the Indian railways? Last year the target was 5,000 wagons and then it was raised after a hue and cry. Sir, the wagon industry is mainly located in West Bengal. Some unit is there in U.P. and some in Bihar. Now in West Bengal Bihar. Now in West Bengal alone, the wagon industry has an installed capacity to produce about 35,000 wagons per annum. Your target last year was 5,000 and then it was raised to a little more than 12,000. What was the condition of this industry? They had to lay off the workers. The entire industry is coming to a standstill. They have no work. Without orders from the railways, how can this industry run and develop? In 1964-65, the railways gave an order to the wagon industry for 27,000 wagons. Now, after 20 years, instead of progressing, we are going backwards. We are reducing our order. It has come down to 20,000 wagons this year. It means that in West Bengal alone, only 50 to 60 per cent of the installed capacity will be utilised. And the plight of the industry in U.P. and Bihar can easily be imagined.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: The capacity is 26,000, all India.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: No. I contest this claim. In West Bengal alone, it is between 33,000 and 35,000. And there is

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one unit in Bihar and there is perhaps another unit in U.P. and they have some capacity also. Whatever it is, as I said, 20 years ago, the demand was 27,000 wagons; now after 20 years, it is only 20,000. So, comparatively it is much lower and it does not indicate any development of railways in regard to carrying goods which are essential for the development of the economy.

In regard to passenger coaches also, for the EMU, Metro and others, the total target is 180 coaches. What does it mean? I do not know whether our Minister has any experience of travelling in ordinary trains. As I said, I do not want to repeat about the overcrowding and congestion in the trains which is a day-to-day problem. How does the Minister think he can give relief to the travelling public? By procuring only 180 coaches for this year? So, this also does not indicate any development.

The same is the position about electrification, track renewal, rolling stock, wagons, etc. Therefore, I say that in regard to carrying passengers, in regard to goods, the Budget has presented a dismal picture. Why do I say so? I would draw the attention of the Minister to the targets set. First let me take the traffic plan. What is your traffic plan? Your revised estimates for 1985-86 are 252 million tonnes originating and your Budget estimates for 1986-87 are 267 million tonnes. The difference is just 15 million tonnes. The Seventh Plan has a total target of 340 million tonnes. Now, if this be the difference between the revised estimates of last year and the Budget estimates of this year, of an increase of only 15 million tonnes, I am afraid in the next year, if you still remain a Minister, when you present the Budget, the revised estimates for 1986-87 may be much lower than your Budget estimates of 267 million tonnes. In regard to carrying of goods, 'goods' means what? Coal, fertilizers, engines, food, all these things. It means you are only making a meagre increase in your traffic plan. It does not help the growth of the economy...

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: May I just make a clarification? The target of 267 million tonnes is for revenue earning traffic. For gross it is going to the 294 which is closer to the 90-91 traffic you are talking about.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Even then the picture is not bright. If we discuss item by item, coal for steel plants, washeries, fertilizers, cement, and so on, I find there is no light in it. Everything seems to be dark. You have become a *status quoist.* You do not want to increase it. That is the mentality, that is the attitude, of your department...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): We will continue with the discussion tomorrow. The House is now adojurned till 11.00 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at six of the clock, till eleven of the clock on Thursday, the 6th March, 1986.

GMGIPMRND—LS II—2017 RS— 21-8-86—400.